

A Paddlewheel In Motion

On this historic river steamer, the only means of propulsion is a 17.5-ton paddlewheel located at the boat's stern. Constructed of white oak and steel, the paddlewheel is 18' in diameter and has 16 separate "bucket" planks which push the water away from the boat to move it forward or pull water toward the boat to move it backward. A long, wooden rod (a "Pitman" or "Pitman arm") extends from each engine to



the shaft running through the paddlewheel, and as the engines perform one arm "pushes" the wheel while the other "pulls" it. This method provides continual rotation of the paddlewheel unless it is mechanically interrupted.

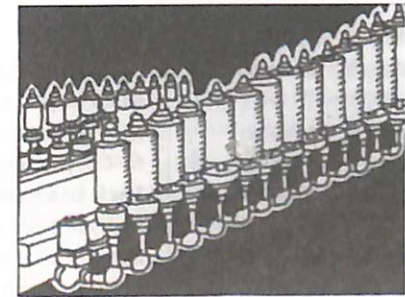
And Finally . . .

Though this "tour" was designed to help you become more familiar with the features of a truly remarkable river steamboat, with a little imagination, a soft breeze, and the faint smell of the slowly-lumbering river nature took a millennium to create, one can almost picture a wharf crowded with steamboats of all sizes and shapes, cargo laid in mounting piles from the shoreline to the town, people carrying on the day's business - scurrying to contract the fastest boat, to negotiate a clever price, to place their goods in the hands of those who know every inch of the waterway as well as they know their own name.

Each historic feature of the "Belle" is a part

of a legacy that reminds us of our rich heritage, and great care is taken to preserve her uniqueness for the joy and benefit of generations yet to come.

THE STEAM CALLIOPE – A HISTORY



The steam calliope was patented on July 4, 1855, by Joshua Stoddard. It was originally intended to replace the bells in a nearby church tower; but the parishioners found the loud, raucous sound less than holy, and the calliope was ultimately (and somewhat unceremoniously) removed from the church. It then found its way to a most logical application through Mr. Stoddard's brother, a captain on a steamboat. He recognized the instrument's potential as an advertising tool, and the calliope's permanent place as standard equipment on riverboats was established.

In time, the idea attracted builders such as Thomas Nichol of Cincinnati, Ohio, the founder of the Thomas J. Nichol & Sons Company which became the largest builder of steam calliopes in the world. Most of the original instruments existing today are Nichol calliopes.

The Belle of Louisville's calliope is a replica of an original Thomas J. Nichol steam calliope. Its whistles

feature copper whistle bells (or pipes) and brass bases and caps that were typical of Mr. Nichol's instruments. It is the last on America's river system to retain the brass keyboard that is unique to the steam calliope.

Different, more modern features make it possible for the Belle's calliope to be played much more easily than the calliopes of a century ago. Micro-switches and solenoid valves have replaced tracker cables and manual double-seated valves, allowing the calliopist to play the keyboard at a safer, drier, and quieter distance from the instrument than was possible with the earlier type of construction.

Modern technology cannot duplicate the "voice" of a steam calliope, so it is truly one of the turn-of-the-century sounds that makes a cruise on board the Belle – an authentic steamboat with a calliope to match – an unforgettable link to our country's past!